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SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION: CAIRO SPEECH "A MESSAGE OF LOVE AND
PEACE"

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¶1. SUMMARY: Following initial reaction in its immediate wake (reftel), the President's Cairo speech continues to draw comment from Oman's dailies. On June 7, The editor-in-Chief of sister dailies "Times of Oman" and "Al Shabiba" headlined his weekly column "A Message of Love and Peace" (his first positive comment on U.S. policy in recent memory). On June 8, Arabic private "Al Watan" and government-owned "Oman" front-paged articles headlined "Obama's Speech Means a New Spirit to the Islamic World" and "U.S. President's Speech Establishes New Ground." The articles carry a quote from Oman's Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs saying the speech represents a "new spirit". On June 7, "Al Watan" said "Well done" to Secretary Clinton for denying Israel's claims of a prior deal between the U.S. and Israel on settlement expansion. END SUMMARY.

"SOARING OPTIMISM" OUT OF CAIRO

¶2. On June 7 in private English daily "Times of Oman" (circulation 25,000) and its Arabic sister "Al Shabiba" (circulation 20,000), Editor-in-Chief Essa Bin Mohammed al Zadjali titled his weekly front-page column "A Message of Love and Peace". Al Zedjali, locally famous for his virulently anti-American and anti-Israeli invective, praised President Obama's speech, citing "a crackle of optimism among the Arabs" and "soaring optimism". At the same time, he maintained his reputation in regard to Israel, warning of "a whole panoply of conspiracy-driven attempts" that might snuff out the new-found optimism. Quotes:

"The Middle East and the rest of the globe were buzzing - and justifiably so - with the news of the visit of U.S. President Barack Obama to the region last week, radiating dollops of hope and high expectations of a 'new beginning' in the relations between the U.S. and the Muslim world. "

"To put it briefly, the imposing, domed hall of the university reverberated with a message of love and peace, all through the gripping speech..."

"Obama's popularity is rising in the Arab and Muslim world because of the importance and urgency he attaches to the Palestinian question and the growing perception that he is sincere about bridging the gap with Arab and Muslim countries."

"However, the soaring optimism is laced with a twinge of pessimism because the president's life is at great risk from the Jews who could resort to a whole panoply of conspiracy-driven attempts if he is seen

to be zeroing in on setting up an independent state for the Palestinians."

OMAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER: "A NEW SPIRIT"

¶3. On June 8, private daily "Al Watan" (circulation 42,000) and government "Oman" (circulation 38,000) ran front-page articles titled, respectively, "Obama's Speech Means a New Spirit to the Islamic World" and "U.S. President's Speech Establishes New Ground". Both articles included a quote, issued at the GCC Ministerial Council meeting, by Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousuf bin Alawi.

"In his inaugural statement at their regular meeting in Riyadh, Yousuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah, the Chairperson of the GCC Ministerial Council for the current term said, 'For the Muslim world, the speech delivered by U.S. President Barack Obama at Cairo University means a new spirit.' He stressed the significance of this new American approach that establishes a new ground to handling various issues of interest to the peoples and countries of the region."

"WELL DONE HILLARY CLINTON"

¶4. On June 7, "Al Watan" congratulated Secretary Clinton for rebuffing Israel's claim of a previous agreement between the U.S. and Israel on settlement expansion. According to "Transparency Discloses

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Israeli Manipulations":

"Well done Hillary Clinton for denying Israeli claims on deals (understandings) with George Bush allowing for expansion of settlements in Jerusalem and elsewhere. The transparency of the U.S. position is the beginning of a new era of being honest with oneself and with others. This clears all doubts, especially with the government of Israel, which continues to disrupt attempts to resolve the dilemma of the Palestinians. Another encouraging step followed, which was the postponement of moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. This bolstered hope for a new approach, which matches words with deeds, that Arabs would like to see from Obama's administration."
HURTADO